Status of ARIs

2287. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the status of agro and rural industries in the country when compared to China and the USA;

(b) whether the country is lagging behind these countries in this field; and

(c) if so, the exact details thereof and the concrete steps proposed to be taken therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) The Government (in the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries) has not undertaken any study/survey to ascertain the status of agro and rural industries (in its purview, namely, khadi, village and coir industries) in India in comparison with that of such industries in China and the USA.

(b) and (c) Do not arise, in view of the reply at (a) above.

ARIs in backward districts

2288. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up agro and rural industries in the backward districts of the country during the year 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) The Government has been implementing the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to help eligible entrepreneurs set up village industry units and thus create employment opportunities in village and small towns with population up to 20,000, throughout the country, including the backward districts. Under this Programme, entrepreneurs can establish village industries by availing